



## The NASA Glenn Research Center Macintosh User Group

Volume 5, Issue 4

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Howdy, and welcome to the September issue of the GRC Mug Newsletter. Hope you all enjoyed the summer and managed to have fun between the rain-drops!

Over the past few months, we have had many Glenn pc users switch to the macintosh platform. If someone in your area is a new mac user, please encourage them to come to the meetings and get their names added to the email list. At this time, contact Ward Souders to be added (or taken off) the MUG email list.

Michael Mills and Russ Pond, of Apple Computer, will be holding another Lunch and Learn on September 29, from 11am - 1pm in the RAC bldg. (**this means pizza**). We are hoping they'll be bringing some new equipment, including one of the new spiffy iMacs. Be sure to be watching your email for more details as it gets closer to the date of this event!

I am looking for beta testers for the new **Tivoli Storage Manager** software. This product will enable you to back up one specific folder on your mac every week to an ODIN server. Please email me if interested. So far we have had 100% success in making this work.

Thank you everyone for contributing to this issue of the newsletter. We cannot "be" without your support and really do appreciate it. Please continue to send me emails with articles and book reviews for future publications and I'll continue to try to make this newsletter as informative and fun as possible.

Till next time.....happy computing!

—Lisa Madden, Editor

[http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/  
AdvisoryGroups/MUG/](http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/WWW/AdvisoryGroups/MUG/)

or

<http://GMUG.grc.nasa.gov>

# President's Corner

Another busy month...

Well, this has been a busy and hopefully successful month for Apple. I hope things keep on moving through the holiday season. Welcome to the new folks who've bought Macs this summer. I've had the pleasure of being asked for some advice by new users and old ones returning to the fold. I certainly hope that trend continues.

The new iMacs came out August 31<sup>st</sup> at the Paris Apple Expo. From what I have seen online, they look pretty cool. I haven't had a chance to make the hour trek from my house to the Apple store on the East side to see one in person. Anyone who has, please let us know how they look. Anyone getting one, let us know how long it took and what you think.

Hopefully our federal Apple rep, Michael Mills, will be able to bring one when he visits us September 29 for our long overdue next Mac User Group Meeting. I haven't been motivated enough to try to put one together in quite a while. Since no one had really been asking for one, I figured there wasn't a great need.

So, how goes it with OS X 10.3? Has everyone been upgraded? Do you all like Exposé? I am a big fan. Been using Panther at home since it came out and am really impressed with it. Looking forward to what Tiger has in store for us.



And lastly, this month I got to interview one of my favorite online bloggers: Wil Wheaton of Star Trek the Next Generation fame. He's had a blog since about 2001 and he's been a Mac user since long before that. I was lucky enough to get some time in his busy schedule for a simple interview. Check it out in this newsletter.



More next time. Until then, enjoy the newsletter and enjoy your Macs, iPods, Panther, iChat, etc.

—Melissa McGuire, President

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The MUG store always has great deals for your members.

This month's highlights include:

Factory Refurbished iBooks starting at \$699

Factory Refurbished Power Mac G4s starting at \$1,099

Factory Refurbished 12" PowerBooks starting at \$1,249

Factory Refurbished iPods starting at \$188

Plus an exclusive \$100 (US) rebate on any installed RAM in selected new Macs!

- **Free freight on all orders**

- **Knowledgeable consultants**

- **Blowout deals**

- **1% goes back to your group in merchandise**

Password

8/1 - 11/30/04- User ID: **xserve** / Password: **raid**

<http://www.applemugstore.com>

This offer is available to members of U.S. user groups.

Get a complete list of all current deals.

<http://www.mugcenter.com/vendornews/vendornews.html>

## Plot Digitizer, a Freeware alternative for doing graphical data extraction

review by: Melissa McGuire

In the last newsletter, I did a review of a shareware application called "Digitizeit". A tip from another Mac user on lab led me to a freeware application that purports to do the same function (digitize graphics of plots in order to extract data) called Plot Digitizer.

So, I headed on over to the Apple software downloads section, and under the "math and science" link, found the following item:

### About Plot Digitizer

A Java program used to digitize scanned plots of functional data. Often data is found presented in reports and references as functional X-Y type scatter or line plots. In order to use this data, it must somehow be digitized. In the past, this has meant manually reading off values from the plot and typing them into a program. This program will allow you to take a scanned image of a plot (in GIF, JPEG, or PNG format) and quickly digitize values off the plot just by clicking the mouse on each data point. The numbers can then be saved to a text file and used where ever you need them. Plot Digitizer works with both linear and logarithmic axis scales. Besides digitizing points off of data plots, this program can be used to digitize other types of scanned data (such as scaled drawings or orthographic photos).

Plot Digitizer includes a special "semi-auto" digitizing feature. For plotted data that trends from left to right, you can simply indicate what data you want digitized with a thick paint brush and the program will automatically sort out grid lines, noise, etc, and will attempt to digitize the line for you.

So, I downloaded the application, and after starting this review, got to work on installing and checking it out. The author has created version for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux. The source code for this program is available for download here: <http://plotdigitizer.sourceforge.net/>

Last time, I actually found that the hardest part to this whole ordeal was finding a scanner to import the paper copies of the graphs I had into jpegs so that I could use the application. I still haven't found a good solution there, other than trying to convince my office to purchase one.

Installation was simple. Simply drag the application to my application folder, and double click on it. It's a Java app, so it's icon has the little cup of coffee on it. Once I had my image, importing it to Plot Digitizer was pretty simple. Just go to File -> Open.

Once opened, the application walks you through setting up the max and min of the X and Y axis. Clicking on the points with this scale already calibrated is fairly simple. After you have picked off the points, they can be downloaded to a text file for use later in another application (like Excel, for example).

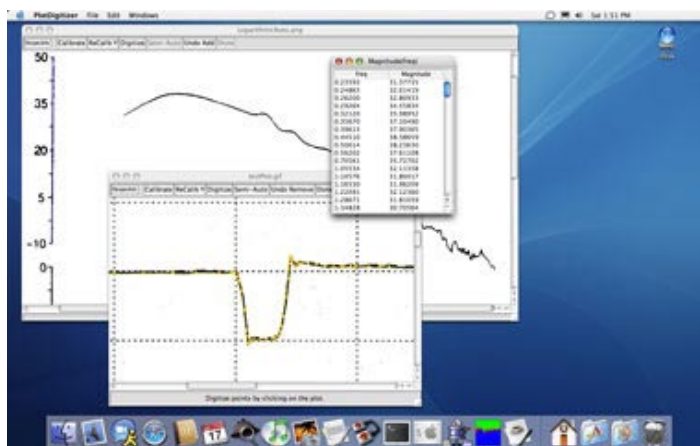
My only complaint about the application is the limit I see in how you can pick off points. Since I knew that some of the points were done at rounded whole numbers on the X axis, I wanted to be able to mouse over the points on the plot until I found the Y that corresponded to the known X. It seems that I couldn't do that with this application. For me, that means that the points have to be taken with a certain amount of error.

However, for free, it's a pretty easy little app that does what it says. If you need something in a pinch to pick points off a chart in a presentation that you can convert into a jpeg or other image file, this will do the trick.

Reference Links:

[http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/math\\_science/plotdigitizer.html](http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/math_science/plotdigitizer.html)

<http://homepage.mac.com/jhuwaldt/java>



*The above review represents the opinion of the author alone and does not imply an endorsement by NASA Glenn Research Center.*

# Safari Bug

*Contributed by: Lisa Madden*

Here is a little “fix it” I found in the Sept Mac Addict for a Safari Bug:

## **Bug: Safari Can't Connect**

Sometimes Safari won't connect to a web site, but after multiple attempts, it does.

### **Work Around:**

1) Navigate to /Library/InputManagers, and delete the file SIMBL (sometimes this is located in <user name>/Library/InputManagers). Doing so will disable PithHelmet - a content-filtering plug-in for Safari - and perhaps other shareware utilities. Note that if you can't find an InputManagers folder on your Mac, there's nothing wrong with your Mac OS X installation -an application that requires an InputManager plug-in creates it.

2) Empty Safari's cache either by selecting Safari > Empty Cache or by deleting the folder located in <user name>/Library/Caches/Safari.

3) run the latest Mac OS X combined Update 10.3.x, which you can obtain from [www.apple.com/support](http://www.apple.com/support) - check the Popular Software Updates list.

4) Install SafariNoTimeout (freeware, <http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/19173>), which will override Safari's default 60-second time-out setting.

5) Delete the file **com.apple.Safari.plist** located in <username>/Library/Preferences, then restart Safari - note that doing so will reset any Safari preferences back to default.

If all of these solutions fail, an Apple Knowledge Base article at: <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=151266> offers more help - including the time-honored message, “The website may be unavailable temporarily. Try again later.”

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# Informed Filler Tip

*Contributed by: Lisa Madden*

If you need to use an Informed Filler form from another NASA site, there are a couple of ways you may do this:

1) Have the sender open the form at their site, and do a “save as” to save the form with an .ipk extension. This saves both the data and the form, so when they send this to you, you may open it in your Informed Filler.

2) If you have to continually open many forms from another NASA site, have someone from that site send you their whole Eforms Center profile. This can then be loaded on your mac in the same location as the Glenn Eforms Center profile and you'd be able to access their forms just like you do the ones at Glenn. However, this only works if their profile is not behind a firewall.

# My Upgrade Experience

by John Riehl

Hi guys(generically speaking)!

Recently my Mac was upgraded to OS X 10.3. Generally things went quite well and I have noticed no significant problems. However, there are a few minor things which I want to alert you to should your Mac get upgraded also.

X11 displayed a rooted window that could not be moved, resized, or otherwise manipulated. Once X11 was reinstalled, this problem went away. So when the Mac tech support team does the upgrade make sure they reinstall X11 (*Ed Note: The tech doing the upgrade is supposed to ask if you use X11, but if not, PLEASE let that person know ahead of time*).

Because of the upgrade, I now get software updates for 10.3 specifically. One of these is a Java upgrade to Java 1.4.2. I could not install this upgrade without first upgrading to 1.4.1. You can find this on the Apple download site or I can give you a copy. Unfortunately, the 1.4.1 upgrade has a bug in its installer that prevents its installation even though the installer is "happy". I learned the work around for this from Dawn Vincej. She told me to do the following and it works.

- \* Move the QuicktimeJavaUpdate.pkg from the MacintoshHD:Library:Receipts folder to the desktop
- \* Run software update to install JAVA (1.4.1 and 1.4.2)
- \* Move the QuicktimeJavaUpdate.pkg from the desktop to the MacintoshHD:Library:Receipts folder (*Ed Note: The tech doing the upgrade is supposed to do all of the above regarding the Java upgrade, and you, the user, should not have to worry about this*).

Duplex printing is now a feature of the print "layout " choice. You really can print duplex.

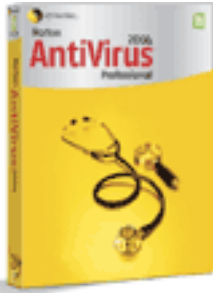
Also make sure that the Eudora "junk mail" filtering options are appropriately set for your needs. The new Eudora gives you a new mailbox called Junk whose contents the user may control (*Ed Note: The upgrade tech sets the default to not put anything in the junk mailbox, so have them show you how to change those settings*).





# Norton Antivirus and the Email inbox issue

By Melissa McGuire with some help from Dawn Vincej



Since I ran into this problem, I thought I might share it with the rest of the GMUG community. Apple's Mail is not yet supported here, but I've actually had the same problem happen with Mail and Eudora. When I lost my inbox in Eudora, I was running older (NAV) virus definitions, and ended up losing everything. When I lost the inbox in Mail, I had updated the definitions, and the inbox was quarantined. My word of warning, don't ever tell Norton if can go and fix a virus infected email. Manually delete the thing yourself. Turn off the quarantining function in NAV, and/or turn off the auto protect feature. I wish I had known that all before losing two different inboxes. Ya, those were good Monday mornings. Just ask my officemate.

I think I have a better understanding of what happened. Both Mail and Eudora handle their mailboxes the same way. Essentially they are large text files with some delimiters between individual messages that both Eudora and Mail look for. So, in theory, you could look at the entire inbox with a text editor like BBedit.

Now comes in the Norton Antivirus (NAV) factor. With this new quarantine function, when Norton sees something suspicious, instead of deleting it, it puts it in some quarantine holding place. Since it isn't programmed to recognize those mail delimiters, Norton takes that whole text file as well as the offending attachment.

Previous to the latest virus definitions, Norton didn't quarantine things, it just deleted them. Either way, it makes for a painful Monday morning (or any morning) when you lose all your inbox mail that you haven't gotten around to filing.

Here are some details from Symantec.

Quoted direct from Symantec. <http://www.symantec.com/index.htm>

Email inbox is deleted after Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh 9.0.x detects a virus in email

## Situation:

Norton AntiVirus 9.0.x for Macintosh detects a virus or Trojan horse in your email. When Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh 9.0.x repairs an email infected with a virus, the inbox is deleted, leaving your inbox empty. You are using Apple's Mail program.

## Solution:

Symantec released a virus definition update on February 19, 2004, to solve this problem with Apple's Mail program. On June 18, 2004, a new update was released to solve this problem additionally with Entourage X/2004, Eudora 6.x, Netscape 7 and Mozilla 1.8.

To prevent Norton AntiVirus Auto-Protect from deleting your email program's inbox when it repairs an infected email message, run LiveUpdate to update your virus definitions. With updated virus definitions this problem should not occur in any of the following email programs:

- Apple Mail
- Entourage X
- Entourage 2004
- Eudora 6.x
- Netscape 7
- Mozilla 1.8

Now when Norton AntiVirus discovers a virus, it does not automatically repair the virus; it asks whether you want to repair the virus. If the virus is attached to an email message, choose not to repair the virus. Open your email program and browse your inbox for email that has an attachment. When you find the email message with the virus, delete the message. In most cases these viruses are PC viruses that do not directly affect the Macintosh.

If you choose to repair the virus, Norton AntiVirus now quarantines the file with the virus rather than deleting it. When the file is quarantined, the inbox may be moved to Quarantine. This is better than being deleted because

you can restore the file from Quarantine. If your inbox was moved to Quarantine with an infected email, restore the infected inbox.

To restore your inbox from Quarantine

1. Open Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh.
2. On the Tools Drawer on the left, click Quarantine.
3. Click the lock to make changes.
4. Type your password, then click OK.
5. Click the infected inbox file that was quarantined.
6. Click Restore.
7. Close the Quarantine window.
8. Quit Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh.

Your inbox should now be restored. You must now delete the email message with the infected file from your inbox. Most likely the infected email will have an attachment that you are not familiar with. Open your email program and browse your inbox for email that has an attachment. When you find the email message with an unknown attachment, delete the message. Be sure to empty the trash in your email program. In most cases these viruses are PC viruses that do not directly affect the Macintosh. When you delete the infected file from your inbox, the next time Norton AntiVirus scans the inbox will not be deleted.

#### Technical Information:

When Norton AntiVirus repairs certain viruses or Trojan horses, it deletes the infected files. With virus definitions previous to June 18, 2004, when Norton AntiVirus deletes a virus or Trojan horse that is attached to an email message, it deletes the file. Depending on the email program, the inbox may also be deleted. With virus definitions dated after June 18, 2004, Norton AntiVirus moves the infected file to Quarantine instead of deleting it. A file can be restored from Quarantine.

*The opinions expressed in this review are those of the author and do not imply the endorsement of NASA.*

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## Origin of TWAIN

By: Debbi Sedlak



I found this interesting tidbit in an Acrobat book:

As a note of interest, TWAIN originated from Rudyard Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West* ("and never the twain shall meet"), which, when the technology was in its infancy, reflected the difficulties of connecting a scanner to a personal computer. However, many people think TWAIN stands for Technology Without An Interesting Name. A TWAIN device contains drivers that convert the optical input from a scanner or digital camera into digital format that can be recognized by computer software.

Reference URLs:

<http://www.scannerdrivers.com>

<http://www.train.org/faq.htm#What%20is%20TWAIN%20an%20acronym%20for>

Free online dictionary of computing: <http://www.foldoc.org/>

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# Just a Geek by Wil Wheaton

*Review by Melissa McGuire*

Details:

**Just a Geek (hardback)**

Unflinchingly honest tales of the pursuit of life, love and fulfillment beyond the Starship Enterprise

By Wil Wheaton

First Edition June 2004

ISBN: 0-596-00768-X

296 pages, \$24.95 US, \$36.95 CA, £15.95 UK

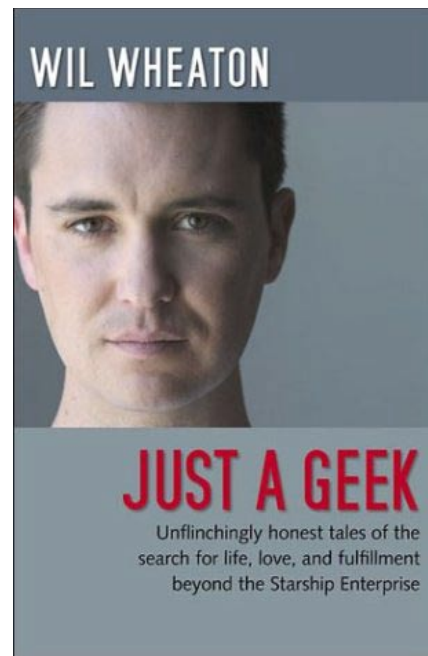
Available at amazon.com for \$16.97 US

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/jag/index.htm>

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1390>

Wil's website:

<http://www.wilwheaton.net/>



This first publication of Wil Wheaton from O'Reilly, brings us an author, confident in his style and happy in his life. This book is a collection of short stories from his life. We start in 2000 at a time when Wil's life wasn't exactly where he thought it would be and follow his journey from presumed "has been" actor to published author and successful blogger. The first few chapters talk of the impetus to the creation of his web blog, through his reunion with Star Trek the Next Generation.

The writing is much like the conversational style found on his web blog at wilwheaton.net. The stories shed light not only on the Hollywood process, but also on the struggles of someone in his 30s trying to succeed, support his family, and be proud of himself. Anyone who's ever been unsure of his/her abilities will find resonance with the "Voice of Self-Doubt" that plagued most of Wil's adult life.

I especially enjoyed chapter twelve "All Good Things..." in which Wil recounts what it was like to come back to the Trek universe on Star Trek Nemesis. Later on, his scene would be cut, but appearing again on Star Trek with the people he so admired as a teenager/young adult helped Wil to make peace with a part of his life and decisions he'd made with which he'd always wrestled.

The book is set up with entries from his blog interspersed by comments or extended with details not originally published at his site. And to bring the Mac perspective into things, the final draft of the book was written using Apple's TextEdit on his iBook. You can see a pic of Wil's iBook on the back jacket cover, along with various Linux and other "geek" paraphernalia.

I finished the book inspired and impressed with the journey I was just allowed to tag along on, and looking forward to the next volume of the story.

*The opinions expressed here are those of the author, and not those of NASA or NASA Glenn Research Center.*



# Google: the Missing Manual

Sarah Milstein and Rael Dornfest  
Pogue Press, O'Reilly

*Reviewed by David J. Chato*

Who knew a blank input box could have so many features? Apparently these folk did because this book is chock full of them. The book is divided into four main sections:

Google Search Techniques; The Unknown Google; Search Tools; and Google for Webmasters. The first of these Google Search Techniques was the most directly useful is full of tips on how to use the google search box. Some of the best tips included how to get google to ignore sites containing certain keywords (type a "-" in front of the keyword you want Google ignore) and how to avoid the Google ten word limit (words in quotes count as one word.)

Part two The Unknown Google contains a description of a bunch of additional services google provides which can be reached by clicking the "more" above the search box. Some of these include a newsgroup service (Google currently hosts the old Usenet news group service) a professional research service (Google Answer), and internet shopping service (Froogle.)

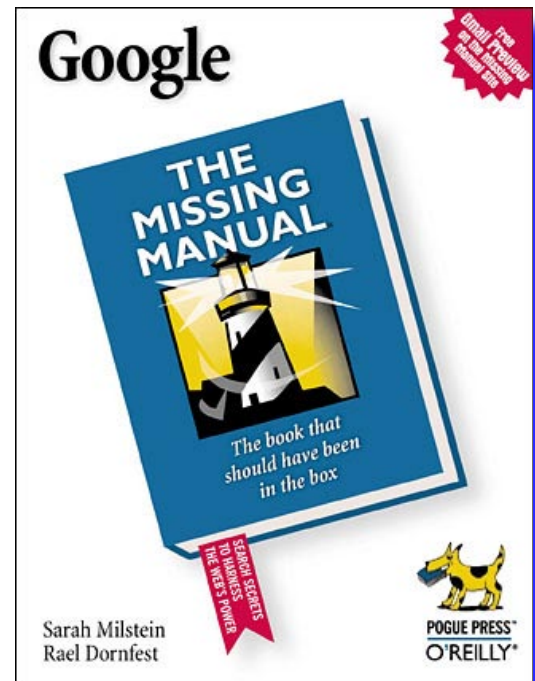
Part three Search Tools is mostly about the google plug-in toolbar (supports Internet Explorer, Netscape, and several other browsers.) However, there are a number of "experimental" tools the adventurous can play with as well.

The final section, Google for Webmasters, is on how to get your website to feature prominently on google, how to purchase and use google ads to promote your website, and other such stuff. I am sure this section will come in quite handy once I establish "Dave's Web Wigetorium." Until then it is just an interesting read for a technical wonk like me.

All in all this is a thoroughly useful book. Even if you just use the section on Google Search Techniques and ignore the rest you will have gotten good value for your purchase.

P.S. Not a lot of "Mac" exclusive stuff in this book, but almost all of its content is "Mac" applicable.

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## 88.1 The 'Burg KCWU-FM Central Washington University The Weekly Geek: A celebrity Interview Internet Radio Station

By: Melissa McGuire

Reference: <http://www.881theburg.com>  
<http://www.881theburg.com/weeklygeek.php>

I came across this site/station while reading one of my favorite sites, WWDN (<http://www.wilwheaton.net>). The folks at The Weekly Geek interviewed my buddy Wil, and I just had to check it out. This radio show broadcasts every Saturday afternoon from 1-4pm, but since I'm not local to Washington State, I don't think I'll be listening. But the best thing is that they take requests for free CD copies of recent celebrity interviews. All they ask is that in return you tell a friend about their site. I consider you all my friends, and this my passing along the information.

The Weekly Geek is a show devoted mostly to gaming, science fiction, comics, and other things usually considered "geeky." That pretty much sums up a bunch of my interests, so I had to check it out. The folks there like to get feedback, so if there's someone you'd like to see them interview, fill out a comment form and send them your thoughts.

Oh, by the way, I did order a CD with the interviews of Wil Wheaton and Mark Hamill. Took about two weeks to arrive. They sent a CD, bumper sticker and business card. I haven't listened to them yet but I've transferred the mp3s into iTunes and onto my iPod. Should make for some interesting listening during my next workout.

*The opinions expressed here are those of the author, and not those of NASA or NASA Glenn Research Center.*

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## Looking for an ISP: MacDialup.com

by: Don Palac

Someone here at grcmug heard that I was in the market for a new ISP, and recommended MacDialup.com (see [www.macdialup.com](http://www.macdialup.com)). While this service caters to Mac users in their advertising, there is very little that's actually Mac specific about the ISP, which is great for cross platform households like mine. I highly recommend this ISP and am grateful to the suggester.

A word of caution. This is a barebones ISP. For \$12.99 a month and NO pop-up ads, IN-Depth (the very small shop that runs this service) is spread pretty thin. Don't expect tons of special software or a lot of bells and whistles. A lot of the special features on their web site, and their web-hosting affiliate, [wehostmacs.com](http://wehostmacs.com), are under construction. You cannot pay for anything by credit card - they have reduced their accounts receivable overhead by accepting only checks.

Having said this, what they lack in bells and whistles, they more than make up for in service and reliability. They have pacific time toll free service hours, but have been very reliable in getting back to me with answers. They have 3 or 4 different networks of mostly v.92 modems, and I have had consistent, reliable, high speed connectivity from places my last ISP could only give me 24 kbd or so. The setup instructions they send you are explicit, well-written, and idiot proof, and I had no problems setting up, manually, accounts on both Macs and PCs. As they get better grounded, I suspect more Mac-specific support will start to fill in the construction spots on their sit. And when you call for service, you will be talking to people who know Macs well, although they know PCs too.

Feel free to reply with questions. These folks are supplying a great product, and deserve the support of Mac users.

# A Conversation with Wil Wheaton: Mac User Group Q&A



## WIL WHEATON DOT NET

50,000 monkeys at 50,000 typewriters can't be wrong

*Melissa McGuire, President of the Glenn Mac User Group (GMUG)*

Well, you all know by now that I'm a big fan of Wil Wheaton, the gentleman who might be best known to NASA folks as playing Wesley Crusher on Star Trek the Next Generation. What you might not know is that Wil's a long time Mac user and big time Mac fan.

In recent years, Wil Wheaton has established a blog presence on the web. His site, <http://www.wilwheaton.net> has gained quite an impressive following, and this past summer he joined O'Reilly to publish his second book, *Just a Geek*. See our April newsletter for my review of his self-published *Dancing Barefoot*, and this issue for my review of *Just a Geek*.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Wil this month for our newsletter. He was generous with his time, allowing me to go over our 15-30 minute time slot in his busy morning. His conversational style was very much the way he comes across on his web site. Because Wil let me know about his experience being on the other side of interviews, I tried to keep my questions short, to the point and interesting. He never told me whether I'd accomplished any or all of my objectives, but I hope I did. Without further adieu, my questions and comments (in bold) followed by Wil's answers (in blue text).

**Did you know there was a NASA center in Cleveland?**

No I did not.

Wil has been to JPL several times since it is just down the street, so to speak. Recently, he was at JPL as a correspondent for Tech TV and did some reporting on the Mars rovers. He did know of Ames and Johnson, and assumed that there were other NASA centers scattered across the country.

**How long have you been a Mac user?** (Requisite MUG-related question)

Had one of the first Mac 128 in 1984. (see picture)

**How did you decide to get a Mac?**

I went into a bookstore and saw a book all about this Macintosh computer, and it was showing how it had this GUI and you could use it to write stories and draw pictures and I just thought it was really, really cool. I thought that it was like Star Trek. I have been a computer user for most of my life. Most advanced computer I had in my life (at that point) was a TI (Texas Instruments).



**Do you still have it?**

Yes

**And what was next?**

From that Mac, I graduated to a 512 and then an SE and then a color Mac II which had 4 MEGS of RAM, and then I had a PowerBook 170 (see picture). After that, I went to the dark side for several years. I got frustrated with the lack of games on the Mac and I felt that there was a period of time that the Mac OS lagged behind Windows and I didn't like how it worked. I have since changed my mind. I am running Panther on my iBook and it's one of the greatest operating systems I have ever used. Corry Doctoro who works for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (<http://www.eff.org/>) was showing off his iBook to me, and I was so enamored with the iBook and the operating system. I was a Linux user right before I became a Mac user again.



Continued on Page 12.....

### **Do you have a favorite Mac application?**

The Mac Mail client. I like the way it integrates PGP. It's some of the best, most seamless integration of PGP I have ever seen. I'm particularly interested in how it'll automate going to a keyserver to grab someone's public key if you want to send encrypted mail.

I also like iPoker, there's a really fun poker app that scenario software. (Wil's a pretty big poker player, He recently played on one of those celebrity poker things but it has yet to air.)

As with some of us Mac users, Wil's had a love/hate relationship with the platform.

It's really interesting for me (I am left handed) and my whole life, especially when I was a kid, being left handed limited a lot of things for me. Particularly baseball gloves. And I remember very clearly going to the store to buy a new baseball glove, and would go through the aisles filled with gloves for right handed (players), and at the back of the store behind last seasons discarded cheerleading outfits would be crappy left-handed gloves (some of which I passed up last year). When windows software outpaced Macintosh software in the 90s, I felt the same sense of the Mac is better, but there's no software for it. I remembered that sense of being a lefty when I was a kid, so that's why I went over to the windows side.

Wil has distinct opinions of where computing should go in the future. The same sort of feelings I hear echoed in others here at NASA Glenn. With a lot of our own NASA-wide apps, like IFM, going web-based, there's a need for cross-platform development.

I think platform independence is the future of computing. I think Java does that and does it really well. I hate it that I am limited in the number of places I can play (on-line poker) because I choose to use a Mac or Linux.

The love/hate relationship with Apple has swung back to hate a bit this past summer. Wil's logic board on his iBook has died again for the fourth time. I have read that there is one iBook model plagued with this problem. I think it's time for Apple to help the fellow out.

I kind of hate my Mac right now and I kind of hate Apple. I am sure it'll pass and I am sure there's someone in Apple tech support that will want to make me happy.

Everyone (especially his O'Reilly folks) has told me "Why are you paying for Apple computers? You write about them all the time. You are a huge proponent of the Mac platform; you reach a million readers a month?" I think it's appropriate considering the pain and suffering that I have endured but I hate to ask for things for myself. (note: as of September 8, 2004, Wil might have a lead through a friend who works at Apple into getting his woes addressed.)

### **What other computers do you own (i.e. what OS's do they run)?**



My stepson has an eMac. And he loves it. Now I am running knoppix (<http://www.knoppix.net>) off a live CD on an old Sony VAIO PC. I have this PC that I had reformatted and put red hat Linux on for about a year and a half without any problem. Then I got creative and started tweaking things and I tweaked myself into a login conflict and I don't now how to fix it. And I don't have time to fix it. So I am going to do a wipe and load of knoppix. I have been working primarily on that machine. I also have a bunch of computers in various stages of being cannibalized for parts in my garage. I plan to put together a server in the house and have it act as a file sever and have everyone connect to it. Use it as a proxy server and use it as an internal mail server. I do have plans to look for a \$300 windows machine for gaming. The way I look at it is it's like having an xbox but it's just configured differently. There are so many great games that I want to play.

### **Do you run Linux on your Mac (iBook)? Do you run OS X?**

Did for a while but then filled up hard-drive with iTunes and took it off. Apple's x-windows environment is great. I used the fink project for a long time before I ran out of space. (With OS X, you) get the security and stability and reliability of Linux plus the absolutely brilliant untouchable design of the Mac. You really, really get the best of both worlds.

### **How did you go about designing your own web site?**

I just looked at a lot of sites that I liked and I copied them. I found a look and a feel that I liked which (...) in 2000, was the standard blog look, nav(igation) on left, blog in center, links on the right. I was never interested in a site that was heavily reliant on JavaScript and flash, There's a place for that, but my website wasn't it.

I really believe that content is more important than anything else and I really believe in keeping it simple. Kind of goes hand in hand with my philosophy that things should be platform independent.

**Continued on Page 13.....**



**Since this is for a NASA publication, do you have any opinion on the President's Space Exploration Vision announced earlier this year? I ask because Patrick Stewart was quoted with an opinion, so I figure that Star Trek alums must all have opinions.**

I actually have a very strong opinion and it's not a very popular one. I think it's very irresponsible right now. I support space exploration. I think going back to the moon would be completely phenomenal and would inspire children everywhere. I wasn't alive when the first Apollo missions went but I remember one of the first pictures of earth sent back from the moon. It was the blue marble picture, and it showed one planet with no divisions and that really affected people. People started looking away from the earth instead of glaring across the fence at the person they disagree with. I think that's a great legacy of that program. I really dislike the Bush administration and I think that the initiative to go to the moon and mars, not unlike most of his "plans" is like an unfunded mandate without any critical thinking behind it.

I also think that obviously because NASA's a government organization, I think it's gonna be political. And I think that science and politics should have nothing to do with each other. Politics is based on ideology and science it based on facts. I think that the bush administration has done a grave disservice to the world by politicizing science. I think this initiative was just political. I don't think that anyone sat down and said, "Is this the best way to spend our money?"

**Last one, what other books do you have in the offing after Just a Geek?**

O'Reilly wants me to write a book on website design. I am going to write a book that talks about personal website design. When I was designing my website and I was teaching myself html and how to put it all together, there was no book giving advice on how to put together a personal website. There really wasn't anything on how to build a site for your family or for your friends, and I am going to grab all the stuff that I learned when I was putting my site together. That's the book that I am gonna write. I don't think we need another book on html. There's really good information on that. There really isn't the philosophy on putting it all together.

After that, I have a kind of a follow-up to Dancing Barefoot. Stories almost exclusively about family. Cause I really enjoy writing about family and step parenting

Also on my list is a novella of poker stories and gambling stories and all that sort of stuff. It's stuff about playing cards and getting into and out of trouble. Mostly fiction but based in truth. Because I always write about stuff that really happens, I am kind of limited. Now I can write fiction and I can get my guy in trouble.

And with that I thanked Wil for his generosity and his time. We'd gone on for 45 minutes, and I'd enjoyed the conversation immensely. He thanked us, the NASA folks, for our efforts in the work we do for the country.

### **Addendum.**

About two weeks after this interview, I got an email from Wil with an update on his iBook situation. Take it away Wil:

Guess what? I just got off the phone with an Apple rep, who called me "on behalf of Steve Jobs." (!) She said that she'd reviewed my situation, and she was going to replace my iBook with a brand new model; which is actually a significant upgrade!

I'm so happy, and so excited, and I so \*don't\* hate Apple anymore.

It's honestly the best customer service I've ever had in my entire life.

And there you have it. Nice work Apple. Nice work Steve.

*The opinions expressed here are those of the author or the interviewee, and not those of NASA or NASA Glenn Research Center.*





# Virtual PC and Microsoft Office tips

by: Don Palac

Virtual PC has been a lifesaver to me over the last couple of years, especially when I was working an exercise with a group of PC laptop users that required frequent file exchanges. Here's some things I learned.

1. Make sure you backup your Virtual PC List folder at least monthly. If Windows gets corrupted, it's a pretty easy recovery if you have a recent backup. There is no alternative (despite Microsoft helpful suggestion that I try to share the grayed-out corrupt Virtual hard disk), and if Windows gets corrupted, say goodbye to every setting, file, etc. that was on that virtual hard disk. Ward Souders also recommended that you save all your data to a Shared Folder, instead of on the Virtual PC hard disk. I actually have made my Mac User folder a shared drive, and I save most of my data right in the same file structure I use in OS 10.

2. I recently had Virtual PC start slowing to a crawl. Repairing permissions in OS 10 cleaned this problem right up.

3. Buy and install Office 2003 for Windows on your Virtual PC if you have need for intensive file exchange on short turnaround. Office for Mac and Office for Windows are NOT smoothly compatible, and with more complex files, trying to go back and fix things can become a nightmare. I still do most of my work in Office for Mac, but it was a lifesaver to be able to work in the same environment as my PC coworkers, and still have all my other Mac goodies available. Here are some considerations:

a. Complex graphics, charts, and tables created in non-Microsoft Windows packages and imported into Windows Office will often crash Office for Mac. There is no workaround. I took the Office 2004 test drive, and the "compatibility report" indeed told me that I would have problems with graphics. I did, and Powerpoint froze and/or crashed when I tried to save the file from the Mac. The same file opened and saved cleanly from Windows Office on Virtual PC.

b. Windows Metafile conversion leaves a lot to be desired on Mac Office, even still in Office 2004 test drive. Colors come out different (I can even tell, and I'm color blind), fonts are changed, and graphics are distorted. These come out fine on Virtual PC Windows Office.

c. Office for Windows has some really great features that are missing from Office for Mac. In "normal view" in Powerpoint, instead of a stupid half blank outline, Windows Powerpoint gives you thumbnails of each slide down the left hand side. You can still select a faster-running outline view if you want. Also in Windows Powerpoint, you can turn on an option to auto-adjust text size to fit a chart, AND to automatically create a "continued" (split into two charts) chart if you try to squeeze too much on one. These are just a couple of examples of a longer list of great features missing from Mac Powerpoint. It seems strange that I discovered these features by giving Microsoft more money as a reward for lack of compatibility between versions of their own products, but I guess that's how the world works.

d. I have yet to encounter a problem reading media or controlling peripherals from Virtual PC. The execution of Virtual PC is not speedy, but otherwise nearly flawless. What runs on it (Windows) is obviously an inferior OS, but Virtual PC runs it as well as it can. I am able to drive a projector from my laptop easily, and switch routinely from mirrored to two-screen modes. This is especially fun to do in front of PC users, who see me running Mac on one screen and Windows on the other, and then magically dragging Windows from one screen to the other. I'm hoping that Microsoft will maintain the quality of this product, now that they bought it from Connectix.

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## Macmothership: a site dedicated to preserving the history of Apple computer

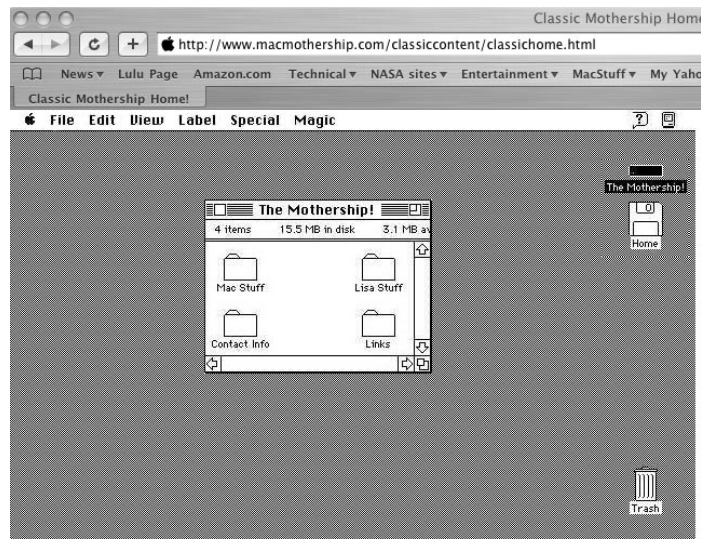
by: Melissa McGuire

Reference: <http://www.macmothership.com/>

Well, some folks have said that Mac fans are sort of crazy. You know, like those folks who believe that aliens are coming for them. Well, this site, macmothership.com, must have chosen its name based on that premise. I ran across it this morning while doing some surfing. For those of you into nostalgia or new to the Mac, who'd like to see how things were during the Lisa and Apple I, II and III eras, head on over and check out this site.

There's a downloads section that contains a lot of old Macintosh software that is apparently so old it's now public domain. Not sure how that happens, but it did. There's also downloadable copies of all the systems from system 7 and back. Hey, on Chi chi's site, you'll find copies of old arcade type games like Lode Runner! Too cool. (Wonder if they work under classic). **(Ed Note: Sounds like another article to me.....)**

The site has the look and feel of the current brushed metal OS X gui, but you can change that. Just click on the "Classic version of this site" for a treat. The old black and white desktop from days gone by.



Since I wasted, er, enjoyed a few minutes on this site, I thought I'd pass it along as a place to check out if you're looking for a diversion.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Macintosh Fun Facts

U	A	R	A	I	O	P	O	Q	A	S	O	M	A	E	E	E	E	P	A	P	A	I	N	
T	U	O	Z	C	C	A	U	P	A	R	I	P	D	C	E	R	W	A	I	P	M	P	S	S
E	O	E	P	U	N	A	L	F	E	A	T	O	E	A	I	T	E	U	P	P	H	F	R	I
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S	P	R	E	H	C	S	Z	D	A	E	S	M	N	A	L	S	N	A	O	U	A	H	U	A
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P	A	V	E	A	S	O	A	A	A	T	N	R	S	O	I	I	T	T	N	A	R	R	V	E
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R	T	W	O	C	H	D	I	H	X	P	E	H	R	E	E	P	C	T	R	E	A	T	S	E

Macintosh

Apple

Panther

Tiger

iPod

iTunes

iphoto

claris

finder

trash

rendezvous

lisa

quadra

powermac

iMac

expose

## Let's have some FUN!!

The first two people to send Melissa McGuire their correctly completed word searches will win a prize! Prizes include: An O'Reilly book: (Digital Photography Hacks, by Derrick Story) or an Apple T-Shirt.